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EXTENSION SERVICE
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X 4-H CLUB WORK IN THE NATION

4-H CLUB LEADERS' MEETING, NATIONAL 4-H CLUB CONGRESS

Chicago, Ill., December 3, 1945

C. B. Smith

Cooperative Agricultural Extension Work is growing. It was a 44 million dollar organization in 1945 and promises to be at least a 60 million dollar organization by 1950.

It now has a scientific force of over 9,500 men and women on its teaching staff with the prospect that this staff will be increased by 2 or 3 thousand more men and women in the near future. There is every reason to believe that 4-H Club work will share in this increase in a substantial way in both funds and staff. Our concern is that in this further growth of Extension there be no loss of enthusiasm, constructive helpfulness, and the missionary spirit of the past in either junior or adult work.

Organizations generally are most friendly, are most enthusiastic and have the greatest desire to be useful and constructive in their youth. With the coming of wealth, staff and maturity there is sometimes a tendency to grow smug and careless in service and to look upon the work as a job rather than an opportunity.

Extension's strength up to now has been largely in its relatively slow growth in both funds and teaching staff. We have had to prove, as we went along, our usefulness to agriculture, homemaking and the public. Moderate yearly growth has enabled us to absorb promising men and women into the Extension teaching staff and imbue them with ideals of service to rural people and a philosophy of rural life and living. Rural people have had time to think with us in Extension, to take part in Extension plans, and to grow with us in all phases of Extension work. All of these matters have helped in the building of a cooperative organization that has steadily grown in usefulness and public favor, and in the confidence of the Nation. Cooperative Extension has won a good name for itself over the past 30 years and is destined to large future usefulness and accomplishment.

Agricultural Extension work is a practical school for over 30 million rural people in the United States, everyone of whom is entitled to receive its teachings in a way that will meet his or her needs. Unhampered by text books and lectures, Extension meets rural needs by putting the oil on where the squeak is. The rural man or woman, boy or girl learn by doing the job rather than by reading about it, or being told about it in lectures.

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This is the unique feature of Extension; this is what gives it strength and makes it effective.

Suddenly a new thing has come into the world. Something that is to affect all our thinking, all our plans, all our future Extension work. Through the studies of our men and women of science we have learned how to utilize the forces of nature to destroy whole cities - possibly even whole nations in a moment of time.

Thus far in our newer knowledge, we have learned how to destroy. In the world immediabely ahead of us we must learn how to create, build and live together in peace, mutual respect and good will, if we are to survive. There is a sword of Damocles hanging over our heads that no power can remove except the power of mutual understanding, good will and the Golden Rule. The threat of the atomic bomb compels us to build a greater spiritual world or perish from the earth.

We have always stood for the building of rural men and women of integrity and character in our Extension work, along with teaching better ways of growing corn and cotton and preparing better balanced meals, and raising better hogs and poultry. In the years ahead of us we shall have to continue these matters in our teaching and add to them the building of good will among men and the neighborly concepts and brotherhood of man. For what would it profit us to learn all agriculture and homemaking the better way if at the same time we do, unjustly, quarrel with our neighbors, and yield to the impulse to war and fail to drop the first atomic bombs. Peace treaties and agreements between nations are scraps of paper unless there are men of good will and integrity behind them.

If we meet the need in the present situation, righteousness and peace must be a part of the future of Extension teaching in still greater degree than ever before.

Perhaps Agricultural Extension can be one of the largest of all agencies in helping keep the peace of the world. Most of the nations of the earth are now developing or looking forward to developing agricultural Extension Services in their own countries. Many of the nations are sending representatives to the United States to study our cooperative agricultural Extension system. We have opportunity to help guide the thinking of these men and women whose clients make up over half the people of the world. If we can give them a vision of better agriculture and homemaking, combined with the Golden Rule, what an opportunity for the Extension Services of America for promoting the welfare of ourselves and of the world.

In better homes lies the great fundamental basis for a better nation and a better world. Helping to build better homes in rural America is one of the first concerns of all Extension forces--county agents, home demonstration agents, 4-H Club agents, Extension specialists, supervisors and directors.

We may improve farming and household mechanics in our Extension efforts and attain to a high state of perfection in these fields, but if we

fail to build homes where understanding and righteousness and love for family and concern for neighbor are, we have failed in the most significant aspect of our Extension teaching and in the opportunity before us.

The understanding state begins with the understanding individual and the understanding family; and the understanding family is largely based on what is put into the hearts of men and women in their youth; and while Extension work with youth is the concern of the whole Extension staff, it is the special concern of 4-H Club forces. How essential that every 4-H Club agent have beauty and truth and integrity and the building of fine families in his or her heart; for effective teaching only comes from an overflowing and understanding heart.

If we can put into the hearts and minds of rural youth the things that go into the making of great homes, we will go a long way toward solving the problems and keeping the peace of the world. The good home is based on a mother of sympathy, tenderness and love; a mother who knows the place of cleanliness, orderliness and peace in the home. It is based on a father who is capable and fair, who deals justly and carries the light of honor in his eyes. The good home is a home with children in it, children who are early taught the precepts of Christ, who learn the beauty of the clean mind, the fair and honest way, the considerate and reverent way. The good home is based on play and laughter, music, and song within it, where trust and obedience are.

The good home is based on work for each member of the family, a sharing of responsibility, planning and income. Within the good home are found hospitality, reverence, charity, the Samaritan concept of neighborliness.

We in Extension help increase farm efficiency and farm income to the final end that we may have these fine homes. Future human life on the earth in most men's thinking today is dependent on the ability of the church, the school, the Extension Services of the nation to build these homes, and the 4-H Club staff which deals with youth holds a key position in the Extension Service for the training of all rural boys and girls to become competent, understanding heads of families.

Now there is another thought I want to get before this group closely related to all I have been saying about the home. It is this--if we are going to teach and train youth, we must ourselves have had effective educational and spiritual training. Effective teaching--teaching that prepares men to live with each other comes not only from the head but equally from the heart. We as Extension teachers need not only the training we get in our colleges of agriculture, in subject matter, in a 4-year course, but we need also training in the things that help make us cultured, human beings mindful of the rights of others--training that comes from being brought up in good homes, on farms, attendance at high schools, and college, with post graduate work in philosophy, morals, the arts, history, and literature and religion. I do not know how effective the Bible study work of the various churches is that are centered around many of our

universities, and which is offered to students; but I think every student preparing for agricultural Extension teaching ought to have had some training in these matters and themselves live the life he or she teaches.

By 1950 there will be 1,500 to 2,000 or more replacement and new Extension agents taken on each year. So far as I am aware, there are no agricultural colleges or other institutions giving anywhere near adequate courses for the training of these agents. I know of no more important job before Extension directors and the Extension forces than to bring this situation to the attention of agricultural college presidents and make arrangements for the more adequate training of cooperative agricultural Extension forces, both men and women. If Extension is to continue to grow, it must show by the quality of its teaching that it is worthy to grow, and no one can put to better use this advance training than 4-H Club forces. They deal with youth and as you train youth so is the family of the nation trained.

Now for a restatement of some of the things I would leave on your mind:

We are becoming big and affluent in Extension. We are increasing our funds and staff rapidly. It is the danger period in our life. Let's never forget ours is a mission rather than a job. Our work is service to the whole nation and especially to rural people. We want to help rural people develop and grow into an efficient, educated people who enjoy their work and share with all others in the comforts, culture, and joys of life. Let's not hurry our work but build soundly as we go.

There is a new force come into the world that threatens human existence. If we continue the old way of quarreling and war, the nations of the earth are likely to disappear. The brotherhood of man, the Golden Rule, must be increasingly in the hearts and actions of men if we are to live. How to grow food and how to live together must go hand in hand in our Extension teaching.

Extension has a part with the schools and the churches in promoting these matters.

The beginning of lasting peace lies in the good home.... It is Extension's high privilege to help build homes of understanding, cooperation, and integrity, where reverence and tolerance abound. There is no bigger job before it.

While all Extension forces are concerned in building great homes in America, it is the special privilege of 4-H Club forces to teach the how and the significance of good homes to all the youth of rural America. As these youth are trained so will rural homes and many urban homes become.

Extension work in America is attracting students from all over the world. To the extent that Extension work here is successful it will have world influence; for more than half the world is rural. If Extension can

influence that half, only, it will have made a great contribution to the moral strength and peace of the world. But when we train rural youth, we also train for the cities since in America practically half the rural youth migrate to the cities carrying with them their culture, their ideals, their religion and their thinking.

There is a great future before Extension; but the emphasis of the future will be somewhat differently placed than in the past. To learn how to live together is even more important than to learn how to increase our income. We must look more fully to our homes and our youth and work with our Extension directors and college presidents to provide courses of training that will still better fit our minds and our hearts to do the work of the nation and the world before us. We are a key group. We must help preserve civilization, and 4-H Club forces who deal with youth may well take the lead in this vital work. Let's help build great rural homes. Let's give our Extension staff the best training there is.

